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THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

BY

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Admir. GENE LaRocque, USN (Ret.) 10/80 UN statement

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates:

I am honored to appear before the Fourth Committee of the United National General Assembly today to speak on the question of East Timor.

A Center for Defense Information study released one year ago identified 37 major and minor armed conflicts around the globe.

It singled out the five year old war in East Timor as the most violent in the world, involving the greatest loss of life in terms of percent of the population killed.

As
The fighting continues today and the United States ~~is still~~ continues to ship~~ping~~ weapons to Indonesia which are used in East Timor.

The war is not over in East Timor.

On June 10th of this year, Fretilin launched a major attack on Dili, the occupied capital of East Timor, and several other towns as well.

Since then, there have been reports of an impending Indonesian offensive, as fresh Indonesian troops and new equipment are apparently flowing in to East Timor.

Thousands of Indonesian combat troops remain in East Timor.

Meanwhile, the United States has pledged over $32 million in military ~~assistance~~ weapons to Indonesia for the ~~current fiscal year (1981).~~ coming year

In contrast, the U. S. government has provided only $13 million in humanitarian assistance for East Timor over the past year.

The United States government, American citizens, and concerned people everywhere, should be asking themselves:

What is more important -- human rights principles or the goodwill of a military dictatorship such as the one in Indonesia?

What is more important -- the integrity of arms sales policies or the dubious influence and allegiance supposedly gained by supplying weapons of destruction to a military dictatorship such as the one in Indonesia?

Very sadly, United States actions regarding East Timor over the past five years have clearly indicated that this country's leaders are willing to sacrifice and compromise human rights and arms sales policies to remain in good favor with a corrupt and repressive Indonesian regime.

The United States has been willing to provide Indonesia with the weapons to attack East Timor in an apparent violation of the 1958 U. S.-Indonesian Mutual Defense Agreement, the human rights sections of the United States Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the International Security Assistance and Arms Export Control Act of 1976, and the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

As a military man with 31 years in the Navy -- many spent on duty in the Pacific and many in strategic planning in the Pacific area -- I would like to focus my remarks today on the subjects of American military interest in East Timor and Indonesia, and American military involvement in Indonesia's military action and occupation of East Timor.

The U. S. government has provided a vast amount of munitions to assist the government of Indonesia to conduct military operations in East Timor because low-level U. S. policy makers have assumed that other factors in the Indonesian-American relationship override the rights of the people of East Timor.

It is my opinion the minor political or economic gains the U. S. may achieve by helping Indonesia do not justify American support of a military invasion by Indonesia.

From a purely military point of view, East Timor is no threat to the U. S. or any country in the region.

As an independent country, E. Timor would serve the interest of peace and tranquility in the region.

East Timor is too small, poor, and underdeveloped to be a military threat to anyone in the foreseeable future.

There are no useful military base facilities in East Timor.

E. Timor
~~It~~ has no navy or air force and could probably never develop any military capability beyond territorial defense.

Its very weakness makes it a prey for larger, more powerful neighbors.

The only possible military value of East Timor is its location at the edge of the Ombai-Wetar strait on the northern coast.

The O-W
~~This~~ strait could be used for the submerged passage of U. S. existing Poseidon missile submarines, but the installation of the Trident missiles in U. S. missile subs and the near deployment of the first Trident submarine eliminates any possible requirement for U. S. use of the Ombai-Wetar strait as a route to the Indian Ocean.

The U. S. does operate missile subs in the Indian Ocean, but on an irregular basis.

The conclusion then is that East Timor is of no military concern to the United States or other countries.

It deserves attention not for military reasons, but because of rational concern for the welfare of a weak and oppressed peoples struggling for survival.

let me turn to indonesia
Indonesia is an important nation but is also of little military importance to the United States.

The U. S. has no military treaty with Indonesia and Indonesia provides no support of any kind for American troops stationed in the Asian theater.

There are no American military bases or facilities or combat troops in Indonesia.

There is little need to use Indonesian airfields or ports because of the proximity to major naval and air bases in the Philippines, as well as extensive US military facilities in Guam, Diego Garcia, and Australia.

One indication of Indonesia's limited military importance to the U. S. is the fact that neither Secretary of Defense Brown nor Chairman JCS, General Jones, mention Indonesia in their Reports to the Congress ~~for FY~~ this year 1981.

Indonesia does not contribute to the defense of the U. S. Most of Indonesia's weapons are designed for use against ~~domestic forces, not for missions~~ adjacent island areas outside its immediate territorial boundaries.

The primary U. S. military interest vis-a-vis Indonesia is generally acknowledged to be unimpeded passage through its straits.

Two of the four Indonesian straits are important to the United States.

Nearly all commercial vessels go through Malacca.

Supertankers, large warships, and submarines must go through Lombak.

Since the U. S. Pacific Fleet is also responsible for operations in the Indian Ocean, it needs to traverse those waterways.

The alternative is the much longer route around the southern coast of Australia.

The U. S. & other nations are ~~is~~ not in danger of having its right of passage denied no matter what stance it takes on East Timor.

It is doubtful that Indonesia would be inclined to impede ~~U. S.~~ transit of foreign vessels

Even when the U. S. suspended all military aid to Indonesia during the Sukarno years, the straits were not closed to American vessels.

If Indonesia wants to express political displeasure, it surely will have choose a less risky means of doing so than trying to stop passage of ~~American ships~~ foreign nav or merchant ships.

Clearly, the U. S. can employ its navy ships to keep the straits open if it chooses to do so.

In sum, the U. S. has no military interests of overriding importance in Indonesia.

It certainly has no military interests which should blind it to the Indonesian actions in East Timor.

Indonesia does provide the U. S. and other nations a significant quantity of oil, but this should not prevent nations everywhere from ~~the maintenance of~~ curtailing standards and restraints ~~on~~ sales of weapons to nations violating basic rights of humans.

American military assistance and the diplomatic acquiescence of many nations have been essential to Indonesia's war effort in East Timor.

Regrettably the facts are these U. S. military weapons have furthered Indonesia's development of the jungle forces it uses in East Timor.

~~U. S. government officials have stated~~ that during the invasion of East Timor that 90 percent of the Indonesian weapons were made in the United States.

For the year just before Indonesia's invasion ~~in FY 1975~~, the United States pledged 450 percent more military assistance to Indonesia than the previous year.

U. S. weapons enabled Indonesia to launch its two major offensives of the war in 1977 and 1978.

Deliveries of American OV-10 Bronco aircraft changed the entire nature of the war.

The events in Iran should have taught the U. S. that it is unwise to become closely identified with repressive, unpopular regimes.

Weapons supplied by foreign countries which are used for suppression of people in another country, engender hostility and reduce the right of men everywhere to live in freedom.

Indonesia is an obvious case where the world knows that weapons provided by a foreign government are not used for defense of Indonesia, but instead are used to suppress a neighbor and acquire territory.

The US & most nations of the world oppose aggression

In the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the turmoil in the Persian Gulf region caused by the Iraq-Iran conflict, the United Nations has stressed the need to uphold ideals and rules of international behavior.

The United States claims to abhor all types of military invasion and intervention, stating that aggression has no place in international affairs.

Yet on this issue of East Timor where there has been a brutal invasion and occupation of a neighboring country, the U. S. and a few friendly nations maintain the tortured position of recognizing the "incorporation" of East Timor, but not recognizing that the people of East Timor have exercised their right of self-determination.

Three times the U. N. General Assembly has declared the "incorporation" of East Timor by Indonesia invalid, but the U. S. holds firm to its stance.

The U. S. and its friends are reluctant to denounce the same type of restrictions on relief aid in Timor that they have publically and continually deplored in Cambodia.

Such inconsistencies seriously undermine American foreign policy in the long run and hurt America's standing in international forums such as this one.

I have encouraged my government to support the position of the General Assembly of the U. N. on East Timor and use political, economic, and military leverage, including reductions or suspension of U. S. security assistance, to persuade the government of Indonesia to withdraw all troops from East Timor and allow the East Timorese to decide their own fate.